DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 478 471 PS 031 386

| | |
|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Landsverk, Ruth Anne |
| TITLE | Creating a Community Approach to Serving Four-Year-Old Children in Wisconsin. Public Awareness Packet. |
| INSTITUTION | Wisconsin State Dept. of Public Instruction, Madison. |
| PUB DATE | 2003-02-00 |
| NOTE | 28p.; For related document, see PS 031 389. Project funded by The Trust for Early Education in cooperation with Wisconsin Forces for Four-Year-Olds Project. |
| AVAILABLE FROM | Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 125 S. Webster Street, P.O. Box 7841, Madison, WI 53707-7841. Tel: 800-441-4563 (Toll Free); Fax: 608-266-2529; Web site: http://www.dpi.state.wi.us. For full text: http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/ dpi/dlcl/bbfcsp/pdf/eccreata.pdf. |
| PUB TYPE | Reports - Descriptive (141) |
| EDRS PRICE | EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | Access to Education; *Child Care; *Community Coordination; Community Planning; Community Programs; *Delivery Systems; Educational Planning ; *Preschool Children; *Preschool Education; Public Relations; Public Support; State Programs |
| IDENTIFIERS | Access to Services; Project Head Start; *Public Awareness; *Universal Preschool; Wisconsin |

ABSTRACT

The Wisconsin Forces for Four-Year-Olds Project promotes the community approach to offering universal access to quality care and learning services for Wisconsin 4-year-olds. Based on the view that quality early education opportunities have life-long benefits for children and the communities in which they live, this public awareness packet summarizes how the community approach to serving all 4-year-olds can be implemented and is designed to be used by communities to create their own public awareness plans. The packet describes the purpose of the project, outlines a rationale for serving 4-year-olds, and delineates benefits of the community approach for children, families, schools, child care, and Head Start. The packet also describes the community approach and offers suggestions for initiating the effort, including inviting key stakeholders, gauging public sentiment, and setting realistic timelines. Strategies for non-public school partners are delineated and include taking the initiative with school boards, building on existing relationships, and connecting with teachers. Suggestions for improving collaboration among planning committee members include focusing on the vision and building trust through frank communication and joint decision making. The packet then describes possible program options for 4-year-olds, including programs at community sites with a licensed prekindergarten or school district teacher and at-home educational support. Issues to be addressed by community planning groups relate to transportation, personnel, program standards, and site-specific situations. The packet emphasizes the importance of engaging the media as partners and shares practices to encourage positive media relations. Finally, eight research or policy reports dealing with the effectiveness of early education are summarized for community use in their public awareness campaigns. Sample community materials complete the packet. (KB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

PS
PSTR
0135

ED 478 471

# Creating a Community Approach to Serving Four-Year-Old Children in Wisconsin

## Public Awareness Packet

**February 2003**

A project funded by
**The Trust for Early Education**

in cooperation with
**Wisconsin Forces for Four-Year-Olds Project**

Administered by the
**Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction**
in cooperation with
other state agencies, associations,
early childhood projects, and communities

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
G. Doyle
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

2

PS 031386

# Creating a Community Approach to Serving Four-Year-Old Children in Wisconsin

## Public Awareness Packet

**February 2003**

A project funded by
**The Trust for Early Education**

in cooperation with
**Wisconsin Forces for Four-Year-Olds Project**

Administered by the
**Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction**
in cooperation with
other state agencies, associations,
early childhood projects, and communities

This publication is available from

Jill Haglund, Early Childhood Consultant or
Stephen Kretzmann, Program Assistant
Division of Libraries, Technology, and Community Learning
Bright Beginnings, Family, School, and Community Team

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
125 S. Webster Street
P.O. Box 7841
Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7841

Jill Haglund: (608) 267-9625
Stephen Kretzmann: (608)267-9278
or
(800) 441-4563
fax: (608) 266-2529
email: jill.haglund@dpi.state.wi.us
stephen.kretzmann@dpi.state.wi.us

Web Address
http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlcl/bbfcsp/ec4yrpag.html

Bulletin No. 03127

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability.

Printed on recycled paper

# Public Awareness Packet

## Creating a Community Approach to Serving Four-Year-Olds in Wisconsin

### Table of Contents


Acknowledgements ..... v

Foreword ..... vii

Purpose ..... 1

Rationale for Serving Four-Year-Olds in Wisconsin ..... 3

Why Develop the Community Approach? ..... 4

What Does the Community Approach Look Like? ..... 6

Getting Started: Making It to the First Meeting ..... 7

Making Room at the Table for Everyone ..... 9

Collaborating Among the Partners: Doing the Work ..... 11

Program Options ..... 13

Issues to be Addressed ..... 14

Engaging the Media as Partners ..... 15

Research ..... 17

Sample Materials

- Editorial: Give Madison Kids a Jump on School ..... 19
- Brochure for Parents ..... 21
- Invitation to Join Planning Process ..... 23

# Acknowledgements

This publication was produced with the assistance of the following individuals:

**Elizabeth Burmaster**, State Superintendent,
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

**Jill Haglund**, Early Childhood Consultant, DPI

**Helene Stebbins**, Trust for Early Education

Rodgers Rhyme Associates: **Anne Rodgers-Rhyme** and **Arlene Wright**

**Jim McCoy**, Consultant, Hollandale, Wisconsin

Writer: **Ruth Anne Landsverk**, DPI

Formatter: **Neldine Nichols**, DPI

Steering Committee members of the Wisconsin Forces for Four-Year-Olds Project:

- **Donna Sorensen**, Association of Wisconsin School Administrators
- **Linda Leonhart**, Head Start Collaboration Project
- **Linda Tuchman**, Waisman Center Early Intervention Project
- **Sherri Krause**, Wisconsin Association of School Boards
- **Mary Madsen** and **David Linsmeir**, Wisconsin Child Care Administrators Association
- **Jim Leonhart**, Wisconsin Child Care and Education Coalition
- **Dawn Abel**, Wisconsin Family Child Care Association
- **Nan Brien** and **Jeanne Erickson**, Wisconsin Council on Children and Families
- **Jane Penner Hoppe** and **Christine Breunig**, Wisconsin Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies/Network
- **Anne Carmody** and **Colleen Cantlon**, Wisconsin Dept of Health and Family Services
- **Jane Grinde** and **Jennifer Kammerud**, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
- **Kathryn McGurk**, Wisconsin Dept of Workforce Development
- **Mary Babula**, Wisconsin Early Childhood Association
- **Kathy Hartjes**, Wisconsin Kindergarten Association
- **Shelley Cousin**, Wisconsin Head Start Association
- **Sue Werley**, Parents Plus of Wisconsin

Members of communities who contributed valuable information for the publication of *Community Approaches to Serving Four-Year-Old Children: Lessons Learned from Wisconsin Communities*: Eau Claire, La Crosse, Portage, Madison, Milwaukee, Montello, and Wausau.

This publication, the second produced by the Wisconsin Forces for Four-Year-Olds Project, is based on lessons learned from project focus groups and from best practice concepts identified by Steering Committee members.

# Foreword

We know that quality early education opportunities have profound lifelong benefits for children, as well as for the communities in which they live. We also know some families have not been able to provide such opportunities for their children. This packet attempts to summarize, in an easy-to-read-and-reproduce format, how the "community approach" to serving four-year-old children can be navigated in communities across Wisconsin, regardless of size, location, or economics.

Although universal four-year-old kindergarten will look and feel different in each community, there is one certainty: The goal of helping every child achieve a good start cannot be accomplished by schools alone.

The community approach asks a tremendous amount of those who care about children. It asks educators, child care providers, and agency staff to adopt the perspective of others, to trust, dream, and create a new way of serving children and families. The community approach requires the best of us: the sharing of ideas, resources, power, and authority; and the blending of public and private space, funds, staff, and material. It is well worth the time and effort as it is the

Special thanks to the community leaders in La Crosse, Wausau, Eau Claire, Madison, Milwaukee, Portage, and Montello who are implementing or beginning a community approach to serving four-year-olds. We all benefit from your courage, persistence, knowledge, and experience.

It is my sincere hope that the information in this packet will be used to launch a fleet of community quests across this state to offer equal opportunity for all four-year-olds. The demands of the community approach are great; the rewards are so much greater!

Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

## Purpose

The Wisconsin Forces for Four-Year-Olds Project is working to promote the community approach to offering universal access to quality care and learning services for Wisconsin four-year-old children. The Trust for Early Education has provided funds to Wisconsin to support this mission. The initiative is housed in the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, as it supports the New Wisconsin Promise.

These materials were developed to help Wisconsin communities engage the public in their efforts to expand options for four-year-olds. Communities can use these materials to create their own public awareness plan which will;

- involve all stakeholders in the care and learning of young children;
- inform education administrators, school board members, and municipal governing bodies about the process of creating a community approach to serving four-year-olds; and
- inform parents and other members of the general public about the needs, goals, and benefits of such efforts.

This document was developed and printed with funding from the Trust for Early Education, an initiative of the PEW Charitable Trusts, which strives to ensure that every American child, regardless of income or background, has access to high quality early education that allows him or her to enter school ready to learn, and to begin life prepared to succeed. TEE strives to increase the quality and availability of early education through state and federal efforts and through a nationwide campaign to educate voters and policymakers on the benefits of universal pre-K education.

Additional copies of this packet may be downloaded from the DPI Kindergarten Website: http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dltcl/bbfcsp/ec4ypag.html.

Copies of Community Approaches to Serving Four-Year-Old Children in Wisconsin: Lessons Learned from Wisconsin Communities, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (January, 2003). Madison, WI. Anne Rodgers-Rhyme and Arlene Wright can be downloaded from the DPI Kindergarten Website: http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dltcl/bbfcsp/ec4ypag.html.

# Rationale
## for Serving Four-Year-Olds in Wisconsin

Wisconsin has long been a national leader in the education of four-year-olds. Since gaining statehood in 1848, our state constitution has called for providing free public education to four-year-olds. Today, we are one of only a few states to include funding for four-year-old kindergarten in the state school aid formula.

**Why does Wisconsin support the education of four-year-olds?**
Research shows that children who attend preschool are

**More successful during school years.** They

- outperform peers on reading and math tests at ages 8, 12, and 15;
- are less likely to experience grade retention or be placed in special education
- are more likely to graduate from high school. (High/Scope, Reynolds, Abecedarian)

More successful outside of and beyond school. They have

- lower rates of juvenile arrest
- fewer arrests for violent offenses
- more jobs and higher wages, and
- a greater likelihood of owning their own home. (Reynolds)

**More likely to have parents who support and understand their developmental and learning needs**. Parents of preschoolers are

- more likely to receive the family and health services they need
- more likely to establish positive relationships with teachers and caregivers early on
- more likely to be involved in the education of their child
- less likely to neglect or maltreat their child. (High/Scope, Reynolds)

**Early childhood education saves our society money.** It is estimated that preschool education saves U.S. taxpayers $7.10 for every dollar invested. (High/Scope, Reynolds, Abecedarian)

**The community approach** allows families options in providing quality care and education to all four-year-olds, regardless of ability or family income. The community approach preserves the health of the child care system in the community while generating additional state funds for the community to educate four-year-olds.

*(See citations on Research page)*

## Why Develop the Community Approach?

All four-year-old children benefit from quality early learning opportunities. Many Wisconsin four-year-olds benefit from some type of early learning program offered by public or private schools, Head Start centers, or child care centers. Other four-year-olds in Wisconsin do not.

Some families are able to provide children with rich and engaging early learning experiences that other children have no access to. Among low-income families, some are able to access services or programs designed to assist them. Other families in Wisconsin cannot access these services for their children.

Several Wisconsin communities are adopting the "community approach" to ensure that all four-year-olds have equal access to quality learning opportunities.

The goal of the community approach is to achieve emotional, educational, societal, and medical well-being of all children. This approach blends funding of public and private resources to distribute learning programs and resources community-wide more efficiently, and offers many benefits to children, families, schools, and communities.

The community approach allows families options in providing quality care and education to all four-year-olds, regardless of ability or family income. The community approach preserves the health of the child care system in the community while generating additional state funds for the community to educate four-year-olds.

### Benefits to Children and Families

The community approach

- provides access to quality learning to all four-year-olds in the community.
- does not label children by ability, disability, family income, or ethnic background.
- results in fewer daily transitions for some children, allowing them to stay in one place for child care and preschool.
- offers families options for preschool and child care.
- reduces fragmentation of services for children, allowing families, teachers, and care providers to communicate and support the child's development.
- makes preschool affordable for all families.
- provides quality learning resources and efforts to children in a variety of settings, including those who stay at home.
- enables children with disabilities to make progress through more interaction with peers.
- results in earlier referrals of children who need additional services.

### Benefits to Schools

The community approach

- results in higher-quality learning programs and more cost-effective use of resources, materials, staff, and space not possible alone.
- makes transition into kindergarten easier for five-year-olds.
- brings additional state funding into the school district.
- lets schools fill unused classroom space.
- allows school staff to identify and address learning-related concerns earlier.
- engages school administrators, school board members, and staff in conversations about early education for all children, not only those at-risk or with special needs.
- builds understanding and relationships earlier among parents and school staff.

### Benefits to Child Care and Head Start

The community approach

- maintains a healthy, viable system of child care in the community for children of all ages and working parents.
- allows child care centers and preschools to use additional funds to improve staff salaries and materials.
- often increases enrollment in the centers with four-year-old kindergarten.
- allows child care and preschool staff to benefit from partnering with a licensed teacher delivering a quality curriculum.
- unites communities around the needs of young children and families, allowing educators and care providers to share knowledge and ideas, learn from each other, and support one another.
- creates a more stable, better-prepared workforce of educators and care providers for young children.
- lets children with disabilities receive services from the public schools within the child care, Head Start, or preschool program.
- increases the diversity of children enrolled in private preschools.

Through collaboration—the sharing of resources, power, information, and authority—the community approach allows all those concerned about the well-being of children to create a new system that benefits all four-year-olds and their families.

## What Does the Community Approach Look Like?

Early childhood advocates from public and private sectors in a growing number of Wisconsin communities are creating quality, universally-accessible preschool learning opportunities for four-year-old children. The community approach is one in which organizations and individuals join together for the well-being of all four-year-old children. They collaborate, sharing resources, authority, information, and power, to achieve together what could not be accomplished alone.

**The community approach:**

- **is community-driven**. Even though they may be initiated by one organization, community efforts focus on maximizing the services and strengths of each participant to offer high-quality educational opportunities for all four-year-olds in the community.
- **welcomes many faces, many voices.** Planning group participants represent public schools, Head Start, private child care and schools, parents, and others. The group comprises a broad range of perspectives and expertise.
- **reflects a willingness to listen**, understand, and respect the needs, goals, and procedures of all participants. The community approach is flexible enough to construct numerous paths to the common goal.
- **takes time and lots of discussion.** Trust and positive relationships among individuals from diverse disciplines occur over an extended time period when people get to know one another and share their best ideas for contributing to the common goal.
- **blends public and private funds and resources** to offer families many options for the education and care of children, including a variety of settings and programs.
- **may transform existing services** or programs. The community approach addresses the question, *"What is it we need to accomplish?"* rather than, "How have we done it in the past?"
- **will be different in each community** because plans reflect the needs of children and families in that community. Urban or rural, large or small, communities generate new ideas to help all children be healthy, happy, and well-cared for.

# Getting Started

## Making It to the First Meeting

Communities can choose from a variety of approaches to start a community collaborative effort, depending on their size and diversity. Some communities build on previous collaborative efforts; others began anew. One community began by holding community forums to bring issues and concerns around serving four-year-olds immediately to the forefront; another community held planning committee meetings for a year before hosting a community forum.

Larger communities (population 15,000 and above) often build a broad base of understanding and support by including as many stakeholders as possible from the first meeting on.

The community approach in smaller communities with less-developed networks of child care may begin more informally with discussions among a few early childhood leaders, perhaps the school principal, Head Start director, and an agency staff member. Planning groups grow larger and more inclusive after a general recognition by the small group that additional representatives of parent and other community groups need to participate in discussions to advance common goals.

There is no one "right" way to begin. Communities that focus on the needs of their children and families and on their unique dynamic will find the best way to begin the journey of the collaborative planning committee.

Following, are considerations for getting the community approach to serving four-year-olds off to a good start:

Invite key stakeholders from the start, including representatives of

- School board, administrators, and principals
- Child care providers – group and family
- Private preschools
- Head Start
- Parents
- Teachers
- Parochial/private schools
- Child care resource and referral agencies
- Family resource centers and support agencies
- County health organizations
- County human services
- Transportation providers (public and private)
- Groups that offer assistance and networking to different cultures in the community, i.e., UMOS or Hmong Associations
- Business
- Media representatives

**Create a vision, mission, and goals** for your group to focus on the well-being of children and families during discussions. What is the overarching goal of your group? How does each person now contribute to the care and education of children? What are the challenges each participant faces? What changes do they desire? Leave time for everyone to participate in these discussions.

**Gauge public sentiment.** Are members of your community interested in pursuing this? What questions do they have about serving four-year-olds? What changes would they like to see in the way four-year-olds are presently served? Survey parents of young children about their early education and child care needs and preferences. Plan to hold community forums or discussions for people to ask questions and express concerns.

**Gather data.** Use available, recent information about the number of young children in the community, early learning and child care needs and resources, and the efforts of other communities.

**Get the word out!** Use existing networks—the media, schools, child care groups, churches, and parent groups—to identify stakeholders or to disseminate information about your efforts. Publicize events and progress often and in a variety of ways, summarizing results for those who could not attend. You may need to provide interpreters and written information in languages other than English for families of non-English speaking children.

**Designate a spokesperson or committee chair** to set agendas, to answer questions from community members and the media, and to collect and forward useful information to the planning committee. Planning committee members should agree on the choice. A meeting facilitator may also be helpful.

**Set realistic timelines.** Collaboration takes time. Expecting a committee newly-formed in the spring to have community-wide four-year-old preschool in place by fall is probably unrealistic for most communities. Sincere listening, discussing, learning, and arriving at a plan of action agreeable to everyone more often takes two years or more. The initial time investment of the community approach often removes seemingly insurmountable hurdles that emerge in communities where one party drives the effort.

# Making Room at the Table For Everyone

How can non-public school partners such as child care or Head Start administrators start or expand community conversation about serving four-year-olds? Following, are some ideas:

**Take the initiative.** Don't wait to read about it in the newspapers. Bring the topic up with school board members and administrators, with city council members, and at child care network meetings. Ask your group to make discussion of this issue a priority.

**Build on existing relationships.** Use the positive connections established in past efforts with school and community representatives to break new ground with the four-year-old kindergarten issue. If you or your group have not previously worked with the schools, you may want to find other ways to collaborate with schools before broaching the four-year-old kindergarten issue.

**Do your homework.** Identify school leaders in your community—school board members, the district administrator, school principals. Learn how decisions are made. Which community leaders have supported early childhood issues in the past?

**Connect with teachers.** Elementary school teachers and child care providers share many of the same concerns about children's learning. What gaps do kindergarten teachers see in the skills and experiences of five-year-olds entering school? How can they work together to help close the gap? Is it possible to share curricula or for child care providers to attend teacher in-service sessions related to early childhood?

**Go with others.** A group of concerned individuals carries more weight with decision makers than one lonely voice. Ask parents or others from the child care community to accompany you when meeting with school or community leaders.

**Educate others about child care's needs and issues.** Use every opportunity to inform school leaders, parents, and members of the community about the demands and requirements of the child care system in your community.

**Find the common ground.** Put the needs of children and families first.

**Be there for the long haul.** Be a regular participant at community or committee meetings. Be patient but persistent. Establishing an effective community approach can often take two years or more from the time planning begins to the day that the doors of four-year-old kindergartens open.

**Engage less traditional partners** in your efforts, including representatives of community housing and transportation. Where do services overlap? Where do gaps in services exist? Are families' needs being met?

# Collaborating Among the Partners

## Doing the work

Once your community holds an initial meeting of public and private advocates for young children and agrees to work together toward providing quality care and education for four-year-olds, the work of the planning committee will become apparent.

Positive collaborations begin by recognizing that each partner brings knowledge, experience, and resources to the table. By building upon and sharing these strengths, a new system of caring for and educating all four-year-olds can emerge. In a community approach, partners find that collaborating with others improves their ability to provide services or achieve goals that they could not accomplish alone.

Following, are some suggestions to help planning committees proceed:

**Build on existing relationships and resources** to maximize services for children and families. Many of the indicators of well-blended programs—shared space and equipment, coordinated transportation, combined public and private funding streams, and professional development for staff—require collaborative planning.

**Focus on the vision**. Some communities find it beneficial to devote the first few meetings to creating a vision that all participants can agree on and commit to. This becomes the "glue" that binds individuals from diverse backgrounds together and allows them to focus on the common, higher purpose of serving all four-year-olds in the community.

**Form subcommittees** to deal with specific issues. Subcommittees allow individuals with specific interest or expertise to study and analyze more complex issues, advancing the understanding of the whole group and sometimes helping to resolve large issues. Present subcommittee findings or recommendations to the larger group for discussion and consensus.

**Build trust** by encouraging frank communication and joint decision making. Establish regular channels of communication by distributing information to all partners in a timely manner, developing a common language, and having regular meetings. Members of a planning committee in one large community agreed that they began to trust each other as strong relationships developed after 15 months of regular meetings and discussions

**Learn together.** Take stock of the pool of early childhood knowledge and resources in your community. What political realities do school districts face? How do private child care centers make business decisions? What gaps in services do families experience?

What program standards should four-year-old preschools have that all partners can support and contribute to?

**Be open to doing things a new way.** Encourage partners to think creatively, dream, and stretch current boundaries. How can public and private space, personnel, funding, and resources be combined and re-configured to offer families options that make quality care and education available to all four-year-olds?

**Learn about what other communities are doing**, then tailor efforts to fit your community. Borrow ideas from other communities, but individualize programs to meet the needs of children and families in your community. What ideas will work here? Which won't? How can public and private resources and facilities in your community be used so everyone can benefit?

**Leave money for last.** Experienced community collaborators stress the importance of initially gaining participants' commitment to seeking solutions, rather than immediately seeking funding. As one community leader remarked, "If our community decides to do something, we *will* find a way to do it."

**Expect membership and committee structure to change.** Group membership and structure are neither static nor permanent. Plan to welcome and update new members of your collaborative committee on an ongoing basis so more experienced members overlap with new members. Recognize the contributions of outgoing members. Periodically reassess the alignment of issues and subcommittees. Are there new issues that need attention? What past issues have been resolved?

## Program Options

How do communities deliver care and education services to all four-year-olds? Where do education programs take place and who teaches them? What about families who choose to keep their four-year-olds at home?

Wisconsin communities conducting universally-accessible preschool programs for four-year-olds are using a variety of options including:

**1. Community Site with a Licensed Pre-K Teacher**

Four-year-old children attend program in the child care, Head Start or private preschool setting for two and one-half hours four or five days a week. The program is taught by a licensed, four-year-old kindergarten teacher employed by the community site. Families may choose to have children remain at the setting and attend the program for the rest of the day. School district contracts with the community site based on the number of children enrolled.

**2. Community Site with School District Teacher**

Four-year-old children receive education services in the child care center, Head Start facility, or private preschool building. A school district teacher comes to the facility to conduct a two and one-half hour program four or five days a week. School district funds support the four-year-old kindergarten program at the child care, Head Start, or private preschool site. Families may choose to have the child participate in additional child care or other services provided at the site for the rest of the day.

**3. School Site**

Four-year-old children attend a two and one-half hour program for four or five days a week in a school district building. The program is taught by a kindergarten teacher employed by the school district. Some districts offer additional child care or Head Start services for children at the school site. In other districts, the child goes to a community site for child care or goes home.

**4. At-Home Educational Support**

When the child does not attend a school district or community-site program, parents can choose to receive and do curriculum related activities at home that support positive child development. Materials can be provided by the collaborative planning group or by another agency that serves families.

Parents may also be informed of and invited to community programs sponsored by the collaborative, including family learning nights, parenting workshops, and support groups.

## Issues to be Addressed

In considering delivery of programs and services, community planning groups will need to find creative solutions to some of the following issues:

**Transportation**

- Public and private funds may need to be pooled to allow for transportation of any interested family with a four-year-old.
- The planning group may need to address parents' concerns about their child riding a school bus: safety, time spent on the bus, or riding with older children.

**Personnel**

- Professional development opportunities should include staff in all programs.
- School district teachers will be better-paid than teachers employed by a community site; career ladders can be developed.
- School district support staff such as nurses, psychologists, and speech therapists may need additional support to travel to multiple sites to deliver services.

**Program Standards**

- Head Start and preschool policies for the number of hours per day and food service are not the same as school district policies.
- Merging program philosophies, standards, and curriculum is difficult for some staff in community planning groups.
- Responsibilities of staff in one program may be different from other programs.

**Site Issues**

- The facilities, services, and environment of some planning group participants will be better than others.
- Some families needing full day care may not be able to afford the tuition charged by a child care center or private preschool beyond the two and one-half hours of programming.
- Some child care centers and private preschools are worried about losing enrollment of four-year-olds and, possibly, having to close.

## Engaging the Media as Partners

It is important to keep families and the public informed about your efforts, since the community approach to four-year-old education and care affects everyone. Media representatives—reporters from radio, television, and newspapers— can play a key role in spreading community awareness and support for four-year-old kindergarten. Invite the media to attend meetings and forums at the very start of your collaboration to equip them with knowledge about important issues.

Following, are some helpful practices to encourage positive media relations:

- provide reporters with all the information available to the general public—surveys, brochures, announcements, and meeting notices and agendas—at least 48 hours in advance whenever possible. Let them know how to reach individuals who can provide them with further information.
- consider assigning a spokesperson from your group who can be readily available to the media. Ideally, the spokesperson should be someone helping to lead the effort who attends every meeting. The spokesperson should be available to talk with reporters before and after meetings to answer questions and provide historical background or facts that deepen understanding about current events.
- always keep your comments and remarks "on the record" and above-board.
- release information to all media at the same time. Don't play favorites.
- ask news reporters to announce events of upcoming public interest and importance in the newspaper, on the radio and on cable TV. Provide them with information about "when, where, what, and who."
- for issues of paramount importance that require widespread community support, plan to have the spokesperson and other committee leaders meet with the editor or editorial board of the local newspaper. Use the opportunity to "make your case," presenting facts and details that support your cause. Expect to see a newspaper editorial in the next few days.

### What to expect from the media

Expect to see controversy reported in the media. The definition of "news" includes making the public aware of issues and events as they are being developed and implemented. Coverage may include quotes from community members concerned or uncertain about what changes will bring. Help the media understand the message by providing background information on the larger issues. Be available for comments or to answer questions.

Expect radio and television reporters to excerpt short quotes from meetings. Expect newspaper reporters to use brief "quotable quotes" that crystallize or frame issues or considerations. Help create these quotes by thinking ahead of what you want to say in a few seconds and how it will sound to community members.

Expect the media to attend some, but not all of your meetings. Make sure they know which meetings are most important. Try to notify the media of your collaborative group meetings in advance. Media representatives unable to attend part or all of a meeting may call the group spokesperson the following day to find out if the group agreed on issues or next steps.

# Research

High/Scope Educational Research Foundation
**Effects Five Years Later: The Michigan School Readiness Program Evaluation through Age 10**; January 23, 2002
www.highscope.org/research/MSRP-Age10.pdf

Participants in the MSRP class of 1995-96

- were significantly higher in overall development
- were significantly more ready to learn K through Grade 4
- had a lower rate of retention Grades 2 to 4
- scored higher on reading and math tests, and
- had parents more involved in school.

Arthur J. Reynolds, PhD; Judy A. Temple, PhD; Dylan L. Robertson; Emily A. Mann, MSSW
**Long-term Effects of an Early Childhood Intervention on Educational Achievement and Juvenile Arrest: A 15-Year Follow-up of Low-Income Children in Public Schools**
Chicago Longitudinal Study
www.waisman.wisc.edu/cls/.

The Chicago Child-Parent Center (CPC) Program provides comprehensive education, family, and health services. Children who participated in the preschool intervention for 1 or 2 years had:

- a higher rate of high school completion
- more years of completed education
- lower rates of juvenile arrest and violent arrests
- lower school dropout rates
- lower rates of grade retention
- lower rates of special education services.

**Abecedarian Project Follow-Up at Age 21**
Abecedarian Project at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. www.fpg.unc.edu/~abc/

This 25-year study shows infancy is the best time to start education. Children who participated in the study

- had higher test scores as toddlers to age 21
- had higher academic achievement in reading and math through young adulthood
- completed more years of education and were more likely to attend a four-year college
- were older, on average, when their first child was born
- had mothers who achieved higher educational and employment levels.

**Ready to Enter: What Research Tells Policymakers About Strategies to Promote Social and Emotional School Readiness Among Three- and Four-Year-Old Children**

by C. Cybele Raver and Jane Knitzer
National Center for Children In Poverty
Copyright © 2002 by the National Center for Children in Poverty
154 Haven Avenue, New York, NY 10032;
Tel: (212) 304-7100; Web site: www.nccp.org.
http://cpmcnet.columbia.edu/dept/nccp/ProEmoPP3.html

This policy paper makes it clear that although there is still much more to learn about the effectiveness of preschool-aged interventions, the scientific evidence of the need for early intervention is compelling. The paper makes recommendations for policymakers and researchers to build on the knowledge base highlighted.

**Preschool for All: Investing in a Productive and Just Society**
Committee for Economic Development
477 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10022, 212-688-2063
www.ced.org/docs/report/report_preschool.pdf
A group of business and education leaders call for free, high quality preschool education for all children age 3 and over who have not yet entered kindergarten.

**Education for All Young Children: the Role of States and The Federal Government in Promoting Prekindergarten and Kindergarten**
Working Paper Series
Anne W. Mitchell
www.ffcd.org/mitchell.pdf
Early Childhood Policy Research
Foundation for Child Development, 145 East 32nd Street, New York, NY 10016-6055, 212/213-8337
April 2001

Given that young children benefit from participating in preschool education, an argument can be made that public funds should be invested toward Preschool education for all children. There is a strong trend over time in the design of pre-k programs toward using all the early care and education resources, including from head start, child care, and schools, to deliver pre-k programs.

**Inequality at the Starting Gate**
Valerie E. Lee and David T. Burkam
Economic Policy Institute
9/30/2002
www.epinet.org/

The report demonstrates a pressing national need to refocus and redouble efforts to close the gap well before children start school. The book analyzes national data on kindergartners and shows that the inequalities in children's cognitive ability are substantial right from the starting gate.

**Set for Success: Building a Strong Foundation for School Readiness Based on the Social-Emotional Development of Young Children**
Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, 4801 Rockhill Rd, Kansas City, MO 64110-2046, 816-932-1000
www.emkf.org/pdf/eex_summary.pdf

This 2002 report compiles seven papers that present the latest scientific findings on the importance of social and emotional school readiness. This report indicates that social and emotional school readiness is a precursor to learning. Before children can learn to read, they must learn basic social and emotional skills—such as the ability to tolerate frustration without "melting down" or acting aggressively, and the ability to be attentive and follow directions. Kindergarten teachers have reported that the single greatest challenge they face is that a majority of the children lack some or all of the needed social and emotional competencies needed to learn.

# Give Madison Kids A Jump On School

Note: the following editorial was printed in the Sunday, December 15, 2002, edition of the **Wisconsin State Journal** on the OPINION page

Madison leaders should spearhead the effort to cover start-up costs for a voluntary 4-year-old kindergarten program in the Madison School District.

Taxpayers who will eventually foot the bill must understand that this is not a boondoggle to provide public-funded babysitting, but a coordinated effort to supply the vital mental nutrition that will make kids better learners, and later, more engaged citizens and productive workers.

Research shows that brain development and acquisition of learning skills in the first five years determine later school achievement. High-quality programs fostering this development can pay off not just in better student performance but in preventing dropouts, delinquency and juvenile crime. And we also know it is difficult and expensive—if not impossible—to make up for parents' failing to engage children during the critical years from birth to four.

Knowing all this, the only real question is: Why isn't quality pre-kindergarten education already available to all Madison parents—instead of only those who can find and afford top-notch private preschools?

Undeniably, the poor children of less-educated parents would benefit enormously as long as the proposed Madison program is of uniformly high quality and makes up for what the kids don't get at home. Head Start helps bridge this gap for only the poorest families.

Madison's 4-year-old kindergarten would be offered five days a week for 2 1/2 hours daily, with transportation provided to sites such as public schools, private child-care centers or other community locations. All teachers would need college degrees and a state teaching license.

It's true that once again we're turning to the public schools to fix broader community problems. Work and other pressures pull parents away from their kids during critical developmental years. But a society that tolerates these realities still owes its children the chance to learn and grow. Thus Madison owes parents the option to send their children to a nurturing environment with professional teachers and a well-designed curriculum instead of a patchwork of day-care centers and babysitters.

Other states are far ahead of Wisconsin. Florida will extend free pre-kindergarten for all 4-year-olds statewide by the 2005 school year. Despite its $425 million price tag, and the implied expansion of government, the measure passed easily.

Madison's proposal is relatively tiny in scope. The program would cost a modest $4.1 million its first year and serve 1,600 children. The state offers a per-pupil subsidy to districts that offer 4-year-old kindergarten, but the formula still leaves Madison about $3 million short for start-up costs over the first two years.

Some parents lament the possible loss of free-spirited childhood. Traditional kindergartens now run all day, and critics might wonder: How long until 4-year-olds go to school all day? Will public education bureaucrats soon take over all parenting responsibilities?

But this nightmare fades in the face of reality: Parents around Wisconsin favor these programs because they help kids develop the basic skills they need to succeed in school. More than 130 Wisconsin public school districts already offer some type of program for 4-year-olds.

Dane County business leaders also have a stake in seeing this program launched: The metro area's economic future depends on a well-educated work force, and this program will put more people on a productive track.

Finally, Madison taxpayers should support the plan because better-prepared students bring public savings on remedial education, special instruction, dropout issues and other costly help for children left behind.

We urge philanthropists to open their wallets and help start this modest local plan for 4-year-old kindergarten, for the good of the kids and the broader benefit of our community.

## Our Belief Statement

Learning programs will reflect our belief that:

- ★ Children enter school at different levels of development
- ★ Transitions for four-year-olds should be minimized.
- ★ Children learn in a variety of environments.
- ★ Children's style of learning may vary.
- ★ Families know what is best for their children.
- ★ Families differ in the amount of support they want in raising their children.
- ★ All families need to be informed and have access to available options and resources.
- ★ Children should enter school with the maximum positive learning experience, which can be provided in a variety of ways, (i.e., at home, preschool, childcare, etc.).
- ★ The entire community shares responsibility with parents for the growth and development of children.



**For more information**, contact any of the following members of the ..... **Community Collaboration for Four-Year-Olds Planning Group**:

(list names, telephone numbers, and affiliation)

(name of group)

# Community Collaboration for Four-Year-Olds

*Helping families provide quality learning for four-year-olds*

The (name of group) is committed to offering every four-year-old in the community access to a quality early learning experience.

**Our goal** is to create collaborative programs for the care and education of four-year-olds in this school district.

**Every four-year-old** in the community should be able to experience developmentally-appropriate learning in a quality group setting.

**We will work together** to offer families resources and learning and care programs that meet their needs.

**The curriculum** will focus on

- ★ language experience
- ★ social competence
- ★ pre-reading and
- ★ self-confidence

Active, exploratory learning is valued and encouraged. As partners with your family, a team of early childhood professionals will support your child's learning.

**Locations.** Depending on available space and your family's needs, learning programs may take place in a public school, a Head Start facility, or a private child care center.

**Teachers** are certified for preschool by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

**Why should a community offer quality learning experiences to all four-year-olds?**

Because it's good for children and for their communities! Research shows that quality preschool

**Helps children**

- ★ build the academic, social, and emotional skills needed to succeed in school
- ★ overcome learning problems and delinquent behavior as they grow older.

**Helps schools and communities**

- ★ close the achievement gap of young children as they begin school
- ★ streamline and coordinate services for young children and families
- ★ engage parents and community members in supporting children's learning.

Madison Metropolitan School District

City of Madison Wisconsin

March 14, 2001

To the Madison Early Childhood Community:

We are pleased to announce the formation of a community-wide effort to look at the delivery of early education to four year olds in Madison. Current services are fragmented and far from universally available. This feasibility study will cover the time period from March to December 2001 and will hopefully result in a vision and recommendations that are supported by all the affected parties.

This study will be facilitated by Jim McCoy and Linda Leonhart, both of whom have extensive experience in public education, private child care, Head Start and related services.

There will be numerous levels of participation in this study, so all voices can be heard. All agencies presently serving four year olds can expect to be approached about their involvement. If, for any reason, you have not heard from Jim and Linda by May, don't hesitate to contact them (Jim McCoy at 266-6286; Linda Leonhart at 266-6285.)

We see this as an exciting opportunity for our public and private sectors to envision a new possibility of offering services to four year olds.

**Art Rainwater**
Superintendent
Madison Metropolitan School District

**Susan Bauman**
Mayor
City of Madison

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

**U.S. Department of Education**
*Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)*
*National Library of Education (NLE)*
*Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)*

# NOTICE

## Reproduction Basis

[X] This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

[ ] This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").



ED031386